



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number: 2207503
Applicant Name : Glen Peterson Architect for GMC Properties
Address of Proposal: 116 25th Ave East

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master Use Permit to establish the use for the future construction of two 2-unit townhouses and one 8-unit apartment building with parking below grade. The existing structures will be demolished under separate permit.

The following approvals are required:

SEPA - Environmental Determination - Chapter 25.05, (SMC)

Voluntary Design Review - Chapter 23.41, (SMC)

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☒ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS
☐ DNS with conditions
☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Description

The site, consisting of two platted lots, is located on the east side of 25th Avenue East one and one-half blocks south of East Madison Street. The site is zoned Lowrise 2 (L2). The site is a steep slope site sloping down to the east. The project received two environmentally critical areas exemptions for steep slopes resulting from previous rights-of-way improvements (MUP 2205727 and 2204923). There are territorial views to the east from the site. The alley is unimproved.



Area Development

The area is characterized by multifamily structures in the L2 and L3 zones. The size of the multifamily structures varies and the structures' relationship to on-site open space, parking configurations and roof forms also varies considerably.

Project Description

The project concept is townhouse-like units at the front of the site and a block of flats behind. Open space is provided on grade and on balconies. There are requested departures from the land use development standards. The proposal is for for-sale housing with above-code parking quantities in an underground garage. There will be four (4) townhouse units and 8 apartment flats. The applicant is applying for Voluntary Design Review in order to receive departures from the land use code for structure width, structure depth and lot coverage. A driving goal of the early design guidance was to create a street friendly design with front steps, porches, front yards and reasonable transition from sidewalk to building.

Public Comment

Five comment letters were received during the official comment period which ended September 24, 2003. Comments included requests for ample parking because area street parking is often full. Other comments included desires for housing with a friendly relationship to the sidewalk and pedestrian environment, a plan for trash and recycling containers, landscaping, bulk and scale compatibility with area housing, residential-type architectural concept. Another comment focused on tenant relocation and urged the developer to use green building practices and products.

ANALYSIS – VOLUNTARY DESIGN REVIEW

The applicants chose to participate in the voluntary design review program which allows an applicant to request departures from the land use code while being subject to the design review process. The project designers received early design guidance from the land use planner March 17, 2003. The project was reviewed by the Design Review Board for the recommendation

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE

Priorities:

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the DCLU staff member provides the siting and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*" of highest priority to this project.

A Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics

The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities.

The building should incorporate as much massing as possible from the steep slope at the back of the lot in an effort to meet the density available in this zone and to capture any possible views. The site is located on a residential street with on-street parking and sidewalks, and cottage style homes. The flatter street side should have yards, gardens and play areas for useable open space.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

The project should reinforce the residential spatial standards characterized in the existing street and set a new and better standard for lowrise development by providing residential spatial characteristics. The design should create a two story character on 25th Avenue and higher in back. A front yard should be created with gardens and open space. The open space should progress from the street and sidewalk public space to semi public space, semi private yard or garden and finally private open space near steps and front door or small porches or decks. The transition described above should be designed without opaque fences or screens.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

Individual unit entrances should be visible and accessible from the street. Entrances for residences at the back of the lot should have a separate entrance from the sidewalk entrances for units facing 25th Avenue East.

A-4 Human Activity

New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street

For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

The area is very pedestrian friendly and has a lot of activity. The existing scale of residences on the street encourages this. This development should retain that design scale. Units on 25th Avenue East should have architectural elements facing the street which will provide residents room to gather, enter, exit, garden, talk to passers-by and to see and be seen. The design should include front porches, steps, mailboxes, newspaper boxes, space for gardening and waiting for a ride and similar features. The area between residence and street should be fairly transparent.

A-7 Residential Open Space

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

Useable, attractive and active open space should be a priority for 25th Avenue.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access

Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

The impact of the automobile should be minimized.

B Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale

Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by , less-intensive zones.

This project should set a new standard in the area in creating housing that transitions in bulk and scale from property line to property line, by using architectural features that create a sense of less bulk. For instance gabled roofs, window detail, small balconies or bay windows, peaked roofs, porches, trellises and landscape elements should all be explored. The design should provide a strong street edge with front yards and front facades set at the same or nearly the same as the neighboring buildings to create a strong and pedestrian friendly urban streetscape.

C Architectural Elements and Materials

C-1 Architectural Context

New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complements the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

This project should set a standard for well-designed small scale residential development in this area. The context of this and nearby residential areas and the density of the lowrise zones should marry to create a highly-textured and multi-faceted development.

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency

Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept.

Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building.

In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its façade walls.

A variety of residential forms should be explored. The development should be unified as it is viewed from 25th Avenue, but the eastern units may transition into other forms as they take advantage of the slope. The concept should be carried out from building form to small details, trim, roof treatment, fenestration etc. Color and modulation should be used to help define the units. Lighting and landscaping should be designed to enhance the overall concept.

C-3 Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

The design should include bay windows, peaked roofs, porches, trellises, interesting paving, small balconies or Juliet balconies, changes in siding details, window details, trees and shrubs to create space, benches, and interesting doors.

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials

Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

Exterior materials should be of high quality and maintainable.

C-5 Structured Parking Entrances

The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

This is an important guideline to enable the rest of the project to provide a good pedestrian friendly streetscape.

D Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

Provide convenient, attractive and protected pedestrian entries.

Entry arbors, or entry pergolas with mailbox, bench, newspaper boxes, signage and addressing and front doors with a small covered porch are reasonable and practical features to include in this climate. Open spaces should be well-designed with a variety of landscape elements. Pedestrian scale (low level) lighting should be part of the next review.

D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Services Areas

Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible.

Trash should be located in a parking garage. Otherwise a well-designed enclosure for recycling and garbage that is durable and maintainable with hose bib and drain could be an alternative.

E Landscaping

E-1 landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites

Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or site

Landscaping, including living plants, special pavement, trellises, screenwalls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

A landscaping plan following the above guidelines should be well-developed for the next level of review.

RECOMMENDATION MEETING:

The applicant is applying for Voluntary Design Review in order to receive departures from the land use code. The recommendation Board meeting on October 1, 2003 was set up for the Board to review the early design guidance and to consider recommending approval of the project at this stage.

Public Comments:

Several member of the public were present and mentioned that they were happy with the way the project massing addressed the street. It was important for these nearby residents to see that the trash and recycling containers would have a storage area and not be left to litter the street. The residential look and feel of the development was praised as well as the one driveway. Full and lush landscaping was suggested to be installed. Other suggestions included providing carefully designed useable open space, and an interesting interior courtyard treatment including siding or paint.



BOARD DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board agreed with public comment that the open space should be especially well-designed with paving and gardening space. Front steps are desirable as proposed, but the Board suggested they be made wider to accommodate a potted plant or a place for people to sit. The interior space needs more design detail as does the elevator tower. The Board deliberated and discussed several concerns with the architect. The Board recommended approved of the design as presented with two conditions. The first condition is to enhance the open space with a combination of elements such as wider steps, larger porches, plants, or pavement patterns, etc. The second is to include lively colors in the interior façade. The architect should work with the planner to realize these conditions.

DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The applicant requested the following departures from Land Use Code development standards:

Development Standard	Requirement	Allowed	Proposed	Comment and guideline reference	Action by Board
Lot coverage	40% for all other structures.	5760 sf 40%	7100 sf 49.3%	This is mitigated by the lowered building height, the increased open space, and the increased landscape area. GuidelinesA-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-6, B-1, C-3	
Structure width	Without Modulation: 30 feet, or 40 feet with a principal entrance facing a street.	50'	108'	The structure width of the "townhouses" at the street is 80'-8". They are sized similar to two houses. We have two lots, not one and want to avoid a massive structure on 25 th . So by breaking the massing, lowering the height, and allowing garage entrance we are over width. B-1 The massing at the rear of the site is 50' for each wing, with a stairwell between them. This stairwell will be set back and transparent. GuidelinesA-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-6, B-1 A-8, C-3	
Structure depth	60% depth of lot.	72' 60%	85'-8" 71.4%	This is mitigated by the lowered building height, the increased open space, and the increased landscape area. GuidelinesA-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-6, B-1 A-8, C-3	
Front Setback	Average setback	14' 8"	11'-8"	In order to have creative site massing and a highly textured front façade and yards we would like some relief in the front setback. C-3, D-1, D-6 E-1, E-2	

ANALYSIS AND DECISION - DESIGN REVIEW

The Director of DPD has reviewed the recommendations of the three Design Review Board members present at the Design Review meetings and finds that they are consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily Buildings and that the development standard departures present an improved design solution, better meeting the intent of the Design Guidelines, than would be obtained through strict application of the Seattle Land Use Code. Therefore, the Director **approves** the proposed design as presented in the official plan sets on file with DPD as of February 5, 2004. The Design Review Board meeting and the recommended **development standard departures** described above are **approved**, with the Board's recommended design **conditions**, enumerated below if any.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated July 15, 2003 and annotated by the Department. The information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states in part: "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" (subject to some limitations). Under certain limitations/circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short - Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulate from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by drying mud tracked onto streets during construction activities; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Storm water, Grading and Drainage Control Code (SGDCC) regulates site excavation for foundation purposes and requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction. The Street Use Ordinance requires watering streets to suppress dust, on-site washing of truck tires, removal of debris, and regulates obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-

way. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures in general. Finally, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the City. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts to the environment and no further conditioning pursuant to SEPA policies is warranted.

Long - Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased surface water runoff due to greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; and increased demand for public services and utilities.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Storm water, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site detention of storm water with provisions for controlled tight line release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies.

DECISION – SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.

CONDITIONS - SEPA

None.

CONDITIONS – DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to issuance

1. The first condition is to enhance the open space with a combination of elements such as wider steps, larger porches, plants, or pavement patterns, etc.
2. The second is to include lively colors in the interior façade. The architect should work with the planner to realize these conditions.

Non-Appealable Conditions

3. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site or must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Holly Godard, tel 206-615-1254). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.
4. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Holly Godard), or by the Design Review Manager. An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least (3) working days in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.
5. Embed all of these conditions in the cover sheet for the MUP permit and for all subsequent permits including updated MUP plans, and all building permit drawings. Include colored drawings showing building elevations in the building permit plans.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: May 13, 2004
Holly J Godard, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development